

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 16, 2005

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**HEALTH DISTRICTS URGE CAUTION ON COSMETIC INJECTIONS  
ADMINISTERED IN NON-HEALTHCARE SETTINGS**

(Fairfax, Va.)—Local health departments in Northern Virginia, the District of Columbia and Maryland are investigating an outbreak of serious skin reactions among at least 16 women who have developed the condition after receiving cosmetic injections in October and November 2004.

According to health officials, the women received the injections from a man who identified himself as a doctor from Colombia. He performed the procedures in private homes. The man was not licensed to practice medicine in Virginia, Maryland or the District of Columbia, and it is not known what substance was injected.

Suzanne Jenkins, VMD, MPH, Acting State Epidemiologist for the Virginia Department of Health, is concerned. “We don’t know the scope of the problem at this point,” said Dr. Jenkins, “But we are hoping to hear from people who have had these types of treatments in non-healthcare settings. Information will be regarded as strictly confidential and callers will help us to help others who have had problems healing after these injections,” she said.

The patients, ranging in age from late teens to 60s, have developed numerous signs and symptoms at the injection sites, including pain, redness, swelling, blisters and abscesses. Some complained of itching and increased skin sensitivity. Most patients began noticing problems about 6-10 weeks after their injections. There have been no deaths and no patients have required hospitalization.

At this time the cause of the reactions is not known, but it is being actively investigated by state and local health departments, the Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and medical providers across the region. Health departments have alerted medical providers to be aware of the situation and to contact local health departments should they see patients presenting with these symptoms.

Health officials strongly recommend against receiving injections of any substance from unlicensed providers. Anyone who has received an injection from an unlicensed medical provider outside a clinic or a hospital, for example a private home, should contact the Virginia Department of Health Regional Office at (703) 934-0627. All caller information will be kept strictly confidential. Officials hope to hear from people who have had reactions to these injections as well as from those who have not, so that they can quickly determine risk factors for reactions, identify the substance involved and provide specific treatment recommendations.

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